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Take Part as a 4-H Club Member?

“I'll be glad to.”



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This bulletin is intended to serve as a guide for 4-H Club members when they are asked to preside at a meeting or banquet, give the invocation, express appreciation to a donor, or report some significant 4-H Club experience. These occasions are some of the many in 4-H Club work where young people have the opportunity to practice and grow in leadership.

It is an honor to be selected and when your chance comes, accept it with enthusiasm and carry it out with dignity and humility.

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National Committee on Boys and Girls Club Work, Inc., 59 East Van Buren St., Chicago 5, Ill., cover and figures 1 and 2. United States Department of State photograph number US 3154-1-57, figure 3. Pennsylvania State Extension Service, figure 4.

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Take Part as a 4-H Member?

"I'll be glad to."¹

By Miss Dorothy Emerson
Associate State 4-H Club Agent, Maryland

Have you been asked to take part on a 4-H program, and for the first time perhaps? Don't hesitate a minute! Just say, "I'll be glad to." Afterwards you will be glad *too*, because you will learn so much from the experience.

All your life you have been building toward this moment. It isn't a matter of chance that you have been chosen. No one can ever do anything just as you will do it. Other members have not had the same experiences and feelings. Your family, your home, your schooling, your friends, your 4-H work, your viewpoints, are all a part of you. Your background gives "color" to your voice and your words and makes up the "feeling" you have as you talk. No one can ever be you but *you*.

Think about this for a few minutes until you realize that you have a place in the universal picture—you belong, you are important.

WHEN YOU MAKE A TALK

Ideas

Ideas are impersonal—they belong to everyone yet they do not belong to any one person. They are free—as free as the air you breathe. Other people are eager to know how ideas look to you. It's fascinating to find that other people feel the same way you do about something—to find that others have the same problems you have. That's why you should always include some of your own experiences in a talk. This is not being egotistical, but impersonal when you talk about your experiences as ideas.

¹ Reference: *Speak For Yourself*, by Jessica Summers Driver. Harper and Brothers, New York. 1948.

Be Idea Conscious Not Self-Conscious

When someone else is giving a talk, you are really not thinking about the speaker as a person, you are *thinking ideas*. You are translating what the speaker is saying into your own world. If a 4-H boy is talking about his calf, you do not visualize the same calf he sees. Your thought is racing along with experiences *you* have had that are similar to his. When you are on the platform remember—no one is thinking about you, provided you are not thinking about yourself. If you are *thinking ideas* you won't be *self-conscious*—you and the audience will be *idea conscious*.



Figure 1.—A good 4-H Club member should be able to fill any spot in a program.

Whenever You Listen—Ideas Come

When you are "listening" you are not thinking about yourself. Your thought is turned away from self to ideas. There are many stories about great artists, writers, and inventors who have been awakened in the middle of the night by ideas that wanted to be expressed. They valued these ideas

enough to forget their own comfort and get right up to make notes. So have a note pad and pencil ready to write down ideas as they come to mind.

Ideas seem to come from every direction when you are working along some particular line. You hear something on television or radio—you pick up an idea from store windows, from nature, from casual conversations.

When you let yourself go—get self out of the way—ideas take over, and you are in their rhythm.

Think for Yourself

Of course you won't have someone else write out a speech for you. If the persons responsible for the 4-H program had wanted an adult or some other club member they would have asked the other person to take this part. You may want to ask someone to jot down notes for you while you *think out loud*. Their questions will help you think. Sometimes it seems easier to get your thoughts together if you can talk out loud to someone.

Don't write out a speech in full, even in your own language. A written speech just can't help sounding somewhat stilted. People want you to *talk* to them—not read a magazine article to them. A 4-H talk should be informal and conversational. It's you talking to just one person. Remember—only one person. So plan to talk as simply and naturally as if you were alone with one person.

Make an Outline

If you are to give a long talk you may want to prepare a simple outline. List a few key words to help bring pictures to your mind. Write these words in *big letters* so when you glance at the card you can see the words easily and quickly even in a dim light.

Plan Your Opening Sentence

It's a good idea to plan a first sentence. Then you will feel secure just before you face the audience. You may never use this exact sentence because the introduction often gives a fresh idea to start off with. If you have a really clever story that fits the theme—fine—but a joke is not necessary every time. Let *ideas* tell you how to start. Never open with an apology. Go right into your subject—keep yourself out of the picture—and keep on the positive side.

The Fitness of Things

When you have the *feel* of a meeting—when you are with the idea, you will find yourself doing and saying the right thing easily and naturally. All of us have had embarrassing moments when we have tried too hard to make a favorable impression. Take plenty of time to get into the rhythm of the occasion.

An audience waiting for an educational or inspirational program would be shocked to have you preside or lead songs as though you were around the campfire. Don't try to be popular by stepping out of the spirit of the meeting. When you lose yourself and fit into the purpose of the meeting people will say, "Well done."

"Thank You"

When you have finished and people come up to congratulate you, say, "Thank you." Make no negative remarks about yourself. The people liked the ideas. They really are not complimenting you at all! They are telling you what good listeners they were—they had fun visualizing pictures that your talk made them think of. Do not spoil it for them by talking about yourself.

Never worry about your performance after it is over. You did the very best you knew how to do at the moment. Tomorrow, next week—of course, you will know more. People feel akin to you, they know you were on the spot. They appreciate your willingness to share your ideas with them.

TELL ABOUT YOUR TRIP

Share Ideas With Others

Do Not Give a Memorized Report

Do Not Pass Souvenirs While Talking

Thank Those Who Made the Trip Possible

Keep Within Time Limit

Leave Time for Questions

Visualize as You Talk

This report is a gift you bring back to the home folks. It isn't just a "I had a wonderful time, wish you were there" talk. It's an *idea talk*. It's visualizing important events, giving keynote

thoughts from speakers, sharing little intimate stories about the whole group.

Do Not Give a Memorized Report

Make a short list of picture words, that will help recall to mind the important things you want to remember to say. If you have had any previous speaking experience try talking without notes. You will be amazed at how the right things to say will come to mind for each particular audience.

Avoid telling what you did at different hours of the day—arrange your talk under *idea* headings.

Be sure to include in your talk *why* you had the trip. Most trips are the result of years of good 4-H Club achievement, of faithfully keeping records. Other club members, parents, and leaders should know this straight from the shoulder.

Do Not Pass Souvenirs While Talking

Keep your trophies—and scrapbook items until the end of your talk. People cannot listen to what you say and at the same time handle objects being passed around.

Thank Those Who Made the Trip Possible

You did not win this trip entirely on your own efforts. Parents, leaders, and other club members have helped to make it possible. Give credit where it belongs.

Keep Within Time Limit

And stop while interest is high. Invite the audience to come up after the meeting and look over your records and souvenirs.

Leave Time for Questions

Others may want to know about things you didn't think to mention. Makes it more interesting to have the audience participate. If other club members went on the same trip ask them in advance for ideas to talk about. Then bring their names in saying for instance, "John wanted me to be sure and tell you about _____. Have these club members who went with you stand up to share in the honor.

PRESIDING

Make Out a Work Sheet

Go on Platform Before the Meeting

Wait for Quiet Before You Start

Have Spontaneous Tie-In Sentences To Introduce Each Number

Talk With Speakers Beforehand—

Give Them a Good Introduction and an Appreciative "Thank You"

Enjoy the Program—Listen to Each Number

Make Out a Work Sheet

If you are responsible for planning the order of events, be sure to balance the program with lighter and heavier numbers. Write your notes in *big letters* so you can read them easily. Prepare tie-in sentences before and after each number. Help the audience feel the spirit of the occasion.

Go on Platform Before the Meeting

Walk around—sit in your chair—face an imaginary audience. Then you will feel more comfortable when you stand before a real audience.

Seated on the Platform

There should be a plan to show where everyone will be seated. Go on the platform in the order in which you will be seated. You will give the signal for them all to sit down. The speaker will probably be seated at your right. You should be seated near the podium or table so you do not have to walk far each time you get up.

Your First Moment Before the Audience

Smile and *wait, wait, wait*. Wait until everything is quiet. Have a few sentences of introduction—not apologies about yourself, but appreciation of a happy interesting experience ahead.

Please do not use hackneyed phrases of which this is the most overworked, "At this time we will now _____. Of course you are going to do it, "At this time." Just state what is going to

happen—if it's a song, tell about it. Perhaps the song is a favorite 4-H song—or fits into the theme of the meeting in a very special way.

All through the program introduce each number with natural friendly conversational phrases and be sure to smile.

Introducing Speakers

Find out long before the meeting all you can about your speakers. Sift through the facts and pick out items you think will interest this particular audience. Be sure you know how to pronounce the speaker's name and have his title exactly right.



Figure 2.—Find out interesting facts about your speaker and use them in your introduction.

Talk with your speakers before the program opens—you can usually pick up some interesting ideas to weave into your introduction. A good introduction helps to bring the audience and the speaker together.

Use no hackneyed phrases such as, "needs no introduction" or "without more ado." Give the speaker's name at the end of the introduction. In a formal meeting a speaker is expected to stand as soon as his name is spoken. Most 4-H meetings are so informal this will rarely happen.

While the speaker is talking (while any part of the program is going on) *listen, listen, listen*. Do not be whispering to others on the platform—do not be running over your notes thinking about what you are going to do next. *Listen*—how else will you catch ideas to use in your response? How else will you set an example for the audience to give courteous attention?

Emergencies arise sometimes. They happen with the most experienced leaders. A *page* should always be on the platform ready to take a note from you to some leader who can help make decisions in an emergency.

Sometimes it is well to take the audience into your confidence. A 4-H Club member presiding before several thousand people at a banquet in Chicago somehow got his papers all mixed up and could not go on. There was a long pause, then his voice came over the microphone in a quiet conversational tone telling us what had happened but he would find what he needed in a minute—and he did.

Thank Those Who Helped To Make the Program a Success

Tell the guests about some of the people who are not on the program—the local leaders—parents—other club members—people who cooked and served the dinner. Be sincere and unhurried as you thank them.

When the Program Is Over

Shake hands with your speakers and thank them again. You are still the host or hostess, right up to the last minute. Don't think about yourself at all—no letdown feeling. You were no more important than anyone else and they are depending on you to make them feel they did a good job.

RESPONSE TO A SPEAKER

**This Is a "Thank You" to the Speaker
Make It Sound Sincere and Appreciative
Speak for the Whole Audience as Well as
for Yourself, "We" not "I"
"Feed Back" Some of the Ideas You Liked
in the Speaker's Talk
Talk in Natural Friendly Style**

Thank the Speaker

The person presiding should always thank the speaker and make some mention of points brought out in his talk. Sometimes this pleasant part on the program is given to another club member.



Figure 3.—Thank the speaker. The audience shows its appreciation.

The response is simply a very special "thank you." The club member is speaking for the entire group so will say "we" more often than "I" in our response. Try to talk in your own language, even if you feel you must write something out in advance.

Find out all you can about the speaker—have some ideas of your own on his subject. *Listen carefully* to the speaker—writing down some of the ideas that appeal to you. Call attention to these in your own language when you respond. A speaker likes to feel he has said something meaningful to his audience.

Your response may include ideas on how club members may go back home and use helpful information that has been given to them.

If a speaker has made a great effort to come—has given freely of his time—certainly one should express appreciation for this fact.

Make your response sincere and natural and it will be just right for you at this time.

are all around. You forget everything but the *idea* that your guest who is receiving the honor is the important figure.

The following basic patterns have been helpful to use in planning a presentation.

Mr. _____, it is an honor for us to present to you this plaque on behalf of the 4-H delegates and leaders attending our _____ National Conference.

Mr. _____, the 4-H Club members at our National Conference have asked us to present you with this honorary 4-H plaque. We appre-



Figure 4.—Focus attention on the person being honored with your words and actions.

PRESENTATIONS AT VERY FORMAL OCCASIONS

Here the *idea* is the important thing. Very few words are used. Photographers and microphones

ciate the fine support you have always given to our 4-H program.

Mrs. _____, it gives me great pleasure as a representative of the 4-H Club delegation at _____ to present you with this _____ which we hope will be a reminder of our appreciation of _____.

THE INVOCATION

Many 4-H Club members are accustomed to having a moment of thanks before meals. Take your turn with this custom at home and you will be ready when the call comes elsewhere. Speak from your heart and all who have hearts will hear and respond.

A 4-H Club girl who has given invocations at 4-H meetings writes: "Do not think of all the people in front of you or speak as though talking to them. You are speaking for them. Remember you are talking to God—out loud—those people just happen to be there.

"A short sincere prayer means more than a long one full of flowery words. Thanking God for what He has given us is just as important as asking for His guidance."

The following notes have been prepared by a 4-H Club boy who gave his first public invocation at a National 4-H breakfast in Washington, D. C.

"Actually offering a prayer at a meeting is not much different from a personal prayer—only you say 'we' instead of 'I.' Prayer is a conversation with God. You must have the feeling that you are talking with God, then you will forget that you are in front of a group and will not worry about what others are thinking. If you are sincere and meaningful others will share these feelings.

"Do not memorize a prayer. I have found that the best way to give an invocation is to think about *ideas*, then arrange them mentally in a logical order. You can easily insert new ideas if you wish to. If you lose your train of thought *pause* momentarily and words will come to you.

"I like to begin a prayer with the words, 'Dear Father' (or just Father)—then I usually thank God for the opportunity of gathering together with others at this occasion, pray for His guidance that His will may be done—and pray that people all over the world will let Him come into their hearts so that we soon may have world peace.

"I believe the important things for 4-H'ers to remember are—

You Are Talking With God
Be Sincere and Meaningful
Keep Your Mind on What You Are Saying—
Not on Yourself
Do Not Memorize the Prayer
Include Thanks, Praise, and Request for
Guidance."

REMINDERS FOR ALL PUBLIC SPEAKERS

Take it easy—don't hurry. Pause often. This gives the audience a chance to think about what you have just said and gives you an opportunity to let a new idea come into mind.

No apologies about yourself or your preparation. Keep on the positive side.

Bring in your own experiences. Audiences like to hear firsthand experiences and feelings. Don't you?

Be natural—talk in conversational style as though to one person.

Visualize what you are talking about. Do not think ahead to what comes next. The audience can only "see" if you are "seeing."

Don't memorize your talks and reports. Don't read them. Use notes if you must—key words—but better still trust the ideas to come spontaneously as you "picture" how you feel—and what you want to say.

Be sincere—be simple—be friendly.

Be idea conscious and you will not be *self-conscious* or *audience conscious*.

Enjoy the experience yourself.